

BIPARTISAN BILL INTRODUCED TO ADDRESS ELECTRIC RELIABILITY AND ELIMINATE CONFLICTS IN FEDERAL LAWS

Washington, DC - Rep. Pete Olson (R-TX) today joined with his colleagues Reps. Mike Doyle (D-PA), Lee Terry (R-NE), Gene Green (D-TX), Adam Kinzinger (R-IL) and Charlie Gonzalez (D-TX) to introduce bipartisan legislation that resolves a conflict in federal law, whereby a company or individual can be held liable for violating environmental laws when complying with a federal order to generate power to avoid blackouts. In recent years, these conflicting federal laws have resulted in lawsuits and heavy fines for electricity providers complying with orders.

The bill, H.R. 4273, clarifies that when a company is under an emergency directive to generate or transmit electricity pursuant to Section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act, it will not be considered in violation of environmental laws or regulations, or subject to civil or criminal liability or citizen suits, as a result of its actions to comply with the federal directive. The legislation also directs the Department of Energy to work to minimize adverse environmental impacts in its emergency order.

"Drastic times call for drastic measures," Congressman Terry said. "During natural disasters, utilities are sometimes ordered to increase their output – to meet urgent needs. This legislation ensures that during such emergencies, utility providers are not penalized for doing what they're instructed to. Nebraskan utilities will benefit from this, as will utility companies all throughout our great country."